[215] 2. Midwifery

One can gain an insight into the intimate problems in this field only after one has acquired the confidence of the older women after a lengthy stay in the country, making a serious broach of the question possible. Once one has this confidence, one is probably safe from deliberate lies. However, one should never depend on the information of one person, but always test the reliability of what one has heard on other people in different places, without ever revealing the least bit of information which one has already acquired. In this way with time and patience I was able to acquire information that was plausible and not contradictory about a series of points from the natives. It was impossible for me to make direct observations in this area. I have tried to fill out the gaps by having a trusted person show me personally the techniques which I had learned were used with pregnant women, those giving birth, and those who have just given birth.

a) Pregnancy (!kũ·i, !go/m, v.). The Hottentot woman does not usually consider missing a period the first symptom of pregnancy, but rather the discomforts of pregnancy, *//gao·rab, such as loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, etc., assuming that the person concerned otherwise does not suffer from these disturbances. The loss of color in the face during pregnancy they designate with the same word that is used for make-up: /ho/bo. Whether the afore-mentioned custom of painting the face originally had some connection with pregnancy is difficult to decide.

The Hottentot women claim that they can definitely determine pregnancy in the second month by massaging the abdomen and by feeling the changed uterus through the wall of the stomach. As soon as pregnancy is suspected, the greased abdomen is massaged 2 to 3 times a week by two women for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. The massage begins at the middle line between the breasts and works downward. They work sideways along the curve of the ribs with wide spread thumbs, and work back again with all five fingers flat, from the area above the iliac crests to the front wall of the abdomen. They listen very carefully to see if they hear a gurgling in the large intestine. If they have found gas, [216] they are satisfied. They push it down on the left side of the body until it escapes to prevent it going "to the head," because there it would produce fever in the woman. The massage ends with a gentle pressing upwards of the groin on both sides of the middle line between the breasts.

While doing this they can feel the uterus and determine each time how much it has been enlarged. 843

Pregnant women sometimes tie a leather band, do-mrob, around their body to prevent the abdomen from drooping. [242]

They do not say anything themselves definite about the sex of the expected child. They suspect a boy when the opening of the uterus is broad.

The child is not considered living until it is seven months along. [761] They are well oriented about the position of the child in the uterus. They distinguish precisely whether the back of the child is turned towards that of the mother, and correspondingly, the forehead of the child is facing the abdominal wall of the mother. One can therefore say that they distinguish readily the first and second head position (each in its most customary sub-type). They know that these positions are the only normal ones.

It can be assumed from the above that they recognize abnormal positions but they do not correct them either before or during birth. [874] Inserting the hand into the vagina to examine it is unknown.

The pregnant woman does not have to follow a special diet. They [263] are only careful to avoid constipation because that makes delivery more difficult and hinders the lochia from discharging.

Precautionary rules of another kind are linked with the deeply rooted belief in the "mistakes" of pregnant women. The stories that the Hottentot women tell correspond in principle with those of the women of our race. As is characteristic for a pastoral people a pregnant woman who still honors the customs of her parents may not be present when an animal is slaughtered; otherwise her child would be born with a slit throat. The woman may not do anything on the mat house with her arms raised up high, in order to protect her child from being strangled by the umbilical cord.

Their ideas about the location of the embryo in the body are in remarkable contrast to their good anatomical knowledge [217] of animals. 843 826
According to their belief, conception occurs in the bladder, //kxuru-s. A second bladder forms there in which the embryo is enclosed. The uterus is merely an appendage of the embryo, which disintegrates during the ejection of the water, tsa/nu-b, the afterbirth and blood. It grows again during the next pregnancy. Because of this opinion they often have one word for the uterus and the afterbirth, //hãs. More enlightened ones distinguish the two, calling the uterus //hãs, "that which stays in the mother" and the afterbirth in our sense, ǂhoa. They often explain

bladder difficulties of pregnant women in this way: During the growth of the embryo there is a greater burden on the bladder and it is not up to this.

They reckon the time of delivery inexactly. Their count begins with the new moon following the first indications of pregnancy. Each new moon is noted with a notch on one of the poles of the hut. When they have cut nine notches, they prepare for the happy event. For example: a woman notices on January 25th, 1904 at the time of the first quarter of the moon that she is pregnant. On the day of the next new moon (February 18th) she makes the first notch and at the ninth new moon (October 9th) the last one. Now she awaits the child, 246 days after the first signs of pregnancy. The pregnancy calendar of a white woman would estimate the birth at the end of October.

b) Delivery. (//oa-s, giving birth, !na-/es, being born; one also hears the word !na/ha-s, relief, ho/s, getting. oa-s means calving of cows and, when said of a person, is scorned as a vulgar expression). I [578] have seen women immediately before delivery with a staff of midwives in readiness. Once I saw six women squatting around in one hut scarcely 3 meters in width. Mixed in with the smoke of the sooty fire was the smoke of the coffee which they burned and of the pipes which steadily made the rounds. It was difficult to recognize the woman who was the cause of this gathering who lay on the floor in the background covered with skins. I was also able to visit women after they had given birth and find out about the details of the birth. But in spite of many personal connections with several families and their many relatives I was never able to be an eye-witness at a birth. Even when the pregnant woman expressly gave me permission to attend, [218] I would either hear about the event just after it had occurred, or if I had found out about it in time, permission had subsequently been withdrawn. Consideration for the woman in labor, which according to the prevailing opinion of the Hottentots does not even permit the presence of a male Hottentot, forced me to give in. I am therefore particularly indebted to my honored old friend, Frau v. B., who grew up among the Hottentots and has been [129] active for decades in their huts as a midwife. She became very well acquainted with the birth practices of the Little Namaland Hottentots where they are still removed from cultural contacts. I have thoroughly tested the information that she gave me. My research in Great Namaland before and after she gave me this information makes me fully prepared to accept the responsibility for the following even without the personal guarantee of my authority.

anyone who had not himself undergone the ceremony dare to intrude there.

The special animal slaughtered is brought into the hut and skinned there by the old woman attending on the couple. She must herself be a widow who has been remarried, and must further be no relative of either bride or bridegroom. No portion of the animal must leave the hut. A deep hole is made near the hearth fire, which has also become /nau, and into this hole are thrown the contents of the stomach and the small intestines. Any blood spilled during the skinning must also drop into the hole, which is then filled up and must not be interfered with. The skin of the animal is given to the old woman for her own use; no one else would dare to use it. Once skinned, the animal is cut up, and every scrap of it then cooked, the heart, liver, and other internal organs together with the blood in one pot, the flesh in one or more other pots.

While the meat is cooking, the actual ceremony takes place. The old woman takes a knife (formerly a sharp piece of quartz would always have been used), and cuts both husband and wife first in front, two large gashes in the groin, one on each side, and afterwards behind, two gashes in the sacral region. With a small horn she then cups blood from these cuts, mixes it together, and adds some of the blood of the slaughtered animal. Next she scrapes some dirt from her arm and mixes it with the blood. Finally she rubs the mixture into all the cuts and bumps the two people together so that their blood mingles. They are then considered duly initiated into the ranks of the twice wed.

After this ceremony, the guests coming in to greet the couple give them beads or bracelets or other similar small gifts. The meat of the animal is now ready, and may be eaten by anyone who has previously undergone the same ceremony. Pregnant or menstruating women and their husbands may, however, not come into the hut, otherwise the efficacy of the cutting is lost; while if any unqualified person were to eat of the meat he would die.

Until the wounds are healed, the couple remain /nau, and may not touch either water or the pots, nor go among the animals. The old woman remains to cook for them outside the hut. When at last the cuts have healed, the man and wife are ceremonially cleansed by the old woman. She smears a mixture of moist cowdung and /naup (red mineral powder mixed with fat) all over their bodies, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in small balls.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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842 As a rule boys are preferred to girls, since they increase the military strength of the tribe and help to defend its herds, as well as to augment them on raiding expeditions.[1] There is no record, however, of any observances or food specially designed to secure the birth of male children, although, as we have seen, the husband of a woman who has only borne daughters may take a concubine.

847 [842] [842.5] Women who do not want children achieve their aim mainly by abortion, which is not infrequently practised. Contraceptives are apparently unknown. The principal abortifacient is the inspissated urine and faeces of the rock rabbit or dassie (*Hyrax capensis*), gathered from the clefts and crannies it inhabits. A decoction of this, boiled and strained, is taken in large doses, if necessary for several days in [842.4] succession. A certain thorn bush (*Sarcocaulon sp.*), pounded whole and boiled, is also used, while still another method is to keep binding the abdomen tightly round with leather straps until delivery is forced on.[2] No motives are given by our authorities for abortion, although presumably it is practised chiefly in case of illegitimate 847 pregnancy. According to Wandres, both the woman and anybody 842 assisting her to procure abortion are, if discovered, brought before the tribal council and punished by thrashing, while at least five sheep or goats are claimed as court fees. The usual number of lashes for such an offence is forty, of which the woman's lover can, if he wishes, take over twenty.[3] The same punishment was given to a pregnant woman if the women managing her found on her abdomen the striations of an old, secret delivery.[4]

● 843 The first symptoms of pregnancy, according to Hottentot ideas, are usually not the cessation of menstruation, but the onset of sickness, vomiting, lack of appetite, etc., providing that the woman does not normally suffer from these complaints. From the time that she feels herself pregnant, she is carefully massaged on the abdomen two or three times a week, for an hour to an hour and a half at a time, by two of the old women of the camp, who take note of the growth and position of the foetus. Conception, according to their ideas, takes place in the bladder, where a second bladder is formed in which the embryo is then enclosed. The uterus is only an appendix to the

[1] Von Francois, *Nama und Damara*, 114; Olpp, *Angra Pequena*, 87; Schultze, "Südwestafrika," 208–9.
[2] Schultze, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 320; Leidlein, "Magic Medicine of the Hottentots," 449, 451, 508; Wandres, "Ueber das Recht der Nama," 686.
[3] Wandres, loc. cit.; cf. Kohler, "Das Recht der Hottentotten," 515.
[4] Schultze, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 319.

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embryo, and goes to pieces with the outpouring of the after-waters and the blood, to form anew at the next pregnancy. The fœtus is not regarded as alive until the seventh month. Gestation is recognized to extend over nine months, and its progress is carefully measured. The calculation starts on the new moon after the manifestation of the first signs, when a cut is made in one of the poles of the hut. Every successive new moon is similarly marked, until the ninth cut is has been made, when preparations are taken in hand for the delivery.[1]

Of the social usages relating to pregnancy we have but little information. Vedder states that the husband, as soon as the first symptoms of pregnancy become visible, must devote special attention to his wife, and is obliged especially to appease her wishes for special food, in order not to endanger the new life.[2] Unfortunately, we are not told in what this special food consists. Schultze, on the other hand, says that the expectant mother does not have to follow any special diet, only care must be taken that she does not suffer from constipation, as this will make the birth more difficult. A pregnant woman, however, may not be present when an animal is being slaughtered, otherwise her child will be born with a slit throat, nor may she reach with upstretched arms to the roof of the hut, lest the child become fatally entangled in the navel cord.[3] It is also believed that if a woman during pregnancy drinks the blood or eats the flesh of the lion or leopard, her child will have the characteristics of these animals—ferocity, swiftness, and strength. Hahn mentions in this connection that a woman whom he once reproached for cruelty attributed her temper to the fact that her mother drank panther (*sic*) blood, in order to bear ferocious children.[4] Pregnant women must also, as we have seen, refrain from entering the hut in which a /*nas* person is secluded, lest they increase the peril in which he finds himself. The beating of a pregnant woman, even by her husband, is regarded as brutality, and if miscarriage follows the culprit is given fifty lashes.[5] There is no information as to the time when sexual intercourse ceases between a husband and his pregnant wife, nor is there anything to indicate that the woman interrupts her normal occupations before the day of birth.

[1] Schultze, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 213–17; *idem*, "Südwestafrika," 226–7.
[2] "The Nama," 131.
[3] *Namaland und Kalahari*, 216.
[4] *Tsaob-//Gams*, 85.
[5] Wandres, "Ueber das Recht der Nama," 668.

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The latter then
gets her married sisters and her brothers' wives to make a little mat enclosure, *kharu oms*, inside at the back of the family hut, on the left hand side. This enclosure is a screened-off segment, measuring two to three feet across at its widest point, in the least regarded part of the hut; and it always has its own little opening leading out behind the hut. While it is being got ready the mother goes to fetch a woman who, though now past childbearing, has been renowned for her former fertility. This woman takes the girl on her back (whence she is known by the name *obe tarib*), carries her into the *kharu oms*, and cares for her while she is there. Should the period come on in the veld far from home, the girl's companions will on no account let her walk, lest all the roots and berries in her path scorch up, but will do their best to carry her home on their backs, taking turn and turn about.

Once in the *kharu oms*, the girl must lie quite still, wrapped closely in her sheepskin kaross. The wind must on no account blow on her, nor must she be exposed to the sun. She may not leave her little hut except at night, and then it must be by the back opening, with one woman behind her and one in front to screen her from view. All the time she is thus secluded she must be careful not to touch cold water on any pretence whatever, nor may she speak above a whisper. It is said that if she talks aloud she will be a chatterbox and muddle in all sorts of affairs later, and will get a bad name among the people. The hearth fire in the outer hut is now also */aus*, and nothing at all may be cooked at it, nor may any pregnant or menstruating or sterile woman come and sit by it, lest dire misfortune befall the girl. No man or boy, again, will come near her, for fear of dread consequences to himself. It is believed that should anyone infringe these or any of the other */aus* restrictions during this time, some sort of sexual disease would beset him; and this could only be prevented from proving fatal if he were able to persuade the *obe tarib* (the old woman officiating) to inoculate him with her "essence" and so free him.

The girl, however, is visited by her older girl friends, who grind sweet-smelling leaves and bark into powder for her, with which she is copiously covered. The time of her seclusion is variously reported as from two or three days to a month. Some girls who had recently been through the rites said they had been secluded for a fortnight; and Mrs. Hoernlé is inclined to think that most probably the time was longer in days gone by, for one of the chief things required of the girl while in her little hut is that she should get fat, with a smoothly shining skin.

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881 574 Immediately she is in the hut, her relations commence slaughtering animals to provide in her honour the feast known as *kharu ǂap*, "menstruation killing." All her nearer relatives contribute to this killing, even her older married brothers, if she has any. Everything slaughtered must be female, and above all a heifer must be provided. The entrails, pluck, etc., of these animals must on no account be eaten by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl. The visiting friends enjoy them. This *kharu ǂap* is the great feast for the women, all who have already passed through the puberty rites being able to take part in it. The only exceptions to this rule are that no menstruating woman may eat of the meat, "lest the girl's period never stop," nor any pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return." No man or boy either was formerly supposed to take any part at all in the feast, but nowadays, owing to the extreme poverty of the people, males are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first animals killed. The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the *aba tarás* takes her share, always part of the outer flesh, inside. The girl and her friends remain in the *kharu oms*, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can. As the time of her seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions, regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the kraal begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined. Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of purification rites takes place.

[841] [843] [535] 881 783

First, during the day, the *aba tarás* enters the girl's enclosure, and cleanses her of all her *axu /aip*, child dirt. This is very thoroughly done with melted butter and moist cowdung, every inch of the girl's body being well scoured. The *aba tarás* smears the salve all over the body of the girl, and after allowing it to dry slightly rolls it off again with the palm of her hand. She then collects it carefully, and hides it in an ant-heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is now given a complete set of new clothing, the old woman carrying off the discarded one. In former days it was at this time that the girl *changed* her maiden's apron for the full woman's dress; hence these puberty rites are sometimes referred to as the *broek-karoos slagt*, from the Dutch term *broek-karoos* (lit. breeches-karoos) applied to the woman's rear apron. Next the girl is led into the outer hut by the *aba tarás*, with whom she prepares a meal for the other women assembled to meet her. Nowadays she prepares tea or coffee, but

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3: Hoernlé E-5 (1912-1913) 1918 FX13 Hottentot FX13
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neither must she speak above a whisper. All informers lay great emphasis on these two 881
points. !Amatis declares that if she talks she will be a chatterbox and meddle in all sorts of affairs later on and will get a bad name among the people. The girl must not leave the hut except at night, and then it must be by the back opening with one woman behind and one in front of her, to screen her from view.

Nowadays her older girl friends visit her, but I am inclined to think that in the old 881
days this would not have been allowed. They help her to grind sweet smelling bark or 302
root or leaves to make powder (*olp*) which is freely used on the clothes and to rub on the skin. The Hottentots have a great variety of scented powders, each with its own name, and in olden days some of the rarer ones were greatly sought after and exchanged for a considerable amount. When I went inland from Walfish Bay, I was entrusted to send [324]
back a special sweet smelling resin which could be had from the people I was going among. These scented powders are used constantly, and a woman spends a considerable amount of her time grinding them. *!Naop*, a face paint made by grinding a soft red stone to [324]
powder and mixing it with fat, is used by the girls to paint patterns on their faces. The time during which the girl must remain in the *khaxa* hut has been differently reported to me. It varies from 2 or 3 days to a month. Hottentots are vague about length of time, but several girls who had been through the experience recently, told me they were in the hut a fortnight. Most probably the time was longer in days gone by, for one of the *chief* things required of a girl in the hut is that she should get fat, with smoothly shining skin. "The girl mustn't be hungry while she is sitting in the hut," says !Amatis. Indeed, immediately she is in the hut, her relatives kill for her, the feast being called *khaxa olp*. All her nearer relatives take part in this killing, even the girl's elder married brothers if she has any. Everything killed must be female, and *chief of* all must be a heifer. The entrails, pluck, etc., must not on any account be eaten by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl — the visiting friends enjoy them.

This *khaxa olp* is the great feast for the women, all who have already passed through these ceremonies being able to take part in it. No man or boy is allowed to have any share in it at all. One woman of the Berseba tribe said to me: "That killing is as great as the marriage killing." Nowadays the Hottentots are exceedingly poor, and cannot afford to kill recklessly as they did of old, hence the men, who formerly took part only in the feast of rejoicing[a] to be described below, are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first animals killed, and this concession is made use of to force the boys to submit to a part of the proceedings[b] to which they would not nowadays be willing to submit otherwise. The only exceptions to this rule that all grown women may partake [341]
of the meat are that no menstruating woman must eat of it, "lest the girl's period never [343]

[a] This index, p. 72, and n. 36. [b] This index, p. 70.

881 [844] [843] stop," as Katrina says, and no pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return." The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the aba tarie takes her share, which must always be part of the outer flesh, inside. While the girl and her friends sit in the khari ôms, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can, the fire which is always made in the centre line of the hut, just a little way inside the door, is ham and nothing must be cooked at this fire at all. Everyone must ‡karesin for the [796] girl. Thus no pregnant or menstruating woman must come and sit by the fire, nor must a sterile woman, lest dire things befall the girl in the khari ôms. All this time too, she will be careful not to touch cold water on any pretense whatever. No man or boy would come near her for fear of dread consequences to himself.

881 [835] As the time of the girl's seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions, regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the village begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined. Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of purification rites takes place.

881 First, during the day, the girl is placed in front of the ham fire, and is cleaned[1] with moist cow dung (ǂhoup) and lump from head to foot by the old woman who carried her into the hut, to clean off all the ôya /urîp.[2] The aba tarie smears the ǂhoup all over the body of the girl, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in handfuls, ǂhoup and /urîp, for the Hottentots allow plenty of it to gather. She then collects it carefully and hides it in an ant heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is then given a complete new set of clothing and the old woman carries off the old one. Meantime a ewe has been slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to the aba tarie. This she must now cook on the fire in the house, the first cooking done there since the girl entered the khari ôms. When the meat is cooked, it is eaten by the aba tarie and other women who, like her, are past childbearing. No one else touches it. Then the aba tarie takes the fire, ashes and all, and dumps it far from the house. She then sprinkles fresh sand on the hearth and lays a new fire. This fire must not be lit from another fire, as is usually done when a fire goes out. It must be lit with flint. Most Hottentots use tinder boxes nowadays, matches being a rare luxury. No doubt originally the fire was lighted with the firesticks which were certainly in use among them.[3] The fire thus lit is now no longer ham. *Nomibi dama ke ǂaes*[4], orthe tara uni ni ǂnaya ("now the

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[1] //Ao ǂrûsen, "the cleaning before going out".

[2] Literally "hay dirt".

[3] Cf. T. Rubin, Tweel./Eisen, p. 77.

[4] ǂ da, "then" or "right", e. g., ǂnae ǂnaes "the right path".

5: Vedder M-5 (ca. 1910) 1928
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marriage and what should be contributed to the reception: 584
or the young man chooses for himself and then the engagement does not consist in asking her and her saying "yes" but in an action. The young man bashfully points a little stick at the girl of his choice. When she takes the stick, breaks it in two and throws the part broken off at his breast, the question is settled and they understand each other.

No matter how the engagement came about—from the day of the betrothal "separation-period" sets in. The engaged couple dare not meet each other, under no circumstances speak to each other and have to avail themselves of certain other people who have to tell the one what the other has to say. Such a period may sometimes be of considerable duration.

2. The marriage ceremony is as a rule celebrated in the 585
house of the parents of the bride in the form of a sumptuous meal, which is paid for either by the parents of the bridegroom alone or contributed to by both pairs of parents.

When after the marriage the bride comes to the village where the bridegroom stays—which may be days or even weeks after the marriage took place—another feast is held.

Since the majority of the Nama have turned to Christianity 585
the old customs have more or less ceased to exist. Christian 178
customs have been amalgamated with ancient traditional forms, whereby now the Christian and then the old characters appear at the wedding ceremonies.

3. The position of the woman among the Nama is by no 562
means that of the devoted servant of the man. According 593
to old custom the hut belongs to her and she disposes of everything within it. When in need of something the man has to approach his wife entreatingly and not imperiously. But since the old-fashioned huts which were covered with [342
rushes by the women have more and more been displaced by 423]
the modern houses, which the man builds with material for which he has laboured, the woman is being pushed into the background. The abode now becomes the property of the man and there is danger that the consequence will be ill-
treatment of the woman. Whether a marriage is permanent 586
or not depends entirely on the relatives for when there are 602
among them those who blow a fire from the sparks of a small difference of opinion, it is easily broken, and the woman returns to her relatives. When on the other hand all the relations are friendly and work against a separation, such 595
a marriage is as a rule permanent. Polygamy was not uncommon with them in olden days, but under the influence of Christianity such cases are exceptions.

4. As soon as symptoms of pregnancy become visible the 843
husband has to devote special attention to his wife. In the first place he is obliged to appease her wishes for special food in order not to endanger the new life. The older women interest themselves so much in the expectant mother that

843 they frequently massage her. During the last months before the birth the young woman generally goes back to her mother. The older relatives of the mother function as midwives and are by no means inefficient. By rising too soon, however, 846 the mother unfortunately exposes herself to danger and diseases among women are consequently not unusual. The 851 christening lies in the hands of the father. In olden days 551 every child received a Nama name reminiscent of the circum- 843 stances just antecedent or subsequent to the birth, but the 642 Christian Nama have given up this custom, and Biblical and European names are very general lately. The midwife who assists at the birth often gets a present which consists of two goats when a boy is born; when a girl is born, this is reduced by half.

857 5. It is held that the adolescent girl will very soon be a 871 help to her mother, and boys have to look after the herds from their very early youth. In this matter the school has to fight many a fight with the parents, who do not realise that, in order to make progress, the child has to attend classes regularly. The mother always regards it as more proper to employ the girl at home, and when a goat is lost, it is much more important to send the boy into the pastures to look for it than that he should attend school. But a change has taken place in this respect and the Nama now learn to understand that a regular attendance at class will be of importance to the child in later years.

841 6. When at the age of 12-14 years the first menstruation sets in with adolescent girls, the whole family celebrates the occasion. In a corner of the hut which is separated from the rest of the room by means of a curtain, the girl is isolated and adorned with all sorts of ornaments by the feminine members of the family. A festival day is appointed, and in families where old customs are still adhered to the girl is given fresh cows-milk to drink. The milk must come from a cow that has its first calf. If this cow does not die during the days of the menstruation or if she does not get ill, the girl is harmless. But if the cow should die it is proof that [784] this girl possesses special powers, and she dare not drink milk from the herd again during the days of menstruation lest she imperil the herd.

[754] Her menstrual blood is looked upon as effective poison which, when dry, they rub from the clothes and mix with [757] hated people's food in order to kill them. The blood of the harmless girl on the other hand is used as medicine for sexual diseases amongst men.

593 7. The brothers and sisters call one another by their names. 576 The parents are also accustomed to calling their children by their names unless they prefer to call the little sucklings "Little Father" or "Little Mother." But children are not allowed to call their parents or their parents' elderly relatives

5: Vedder M-5 (ca. 1910) 1928
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by their names. In their communications they have titles of honour in accordance with the degree of relationship. 593 576

It might be mentioned here that the missionaries have succeeded in introducing family names which were unknown to the Nama before. These family names are derived from the Nama language, the heathen names of the grandfathers and great-grandfathers being changed into the family names of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Only the Orlam tribes have family names which were given to them by their masters in the Cape, *e.g.*, Teapot, Vlermuis, Afrikaner, etc., etc. 551 [619]

8. Their old national dress is very seldom worn. It consisted of home-dressed skins which were worn as aprons in front and at the back with a leather belt; and a large skin which served as a cloak and blanket and, twisted over the right shoulder and underneath the left arm, served as a bag for the gatherer of veld-kos. 291

At present both men and women go clad in European clothes. Coloured designs are preferred. While the Herero women have clung to the mode of dress introduced by the wives of missionaries 60 years ago, the Nama has not adopted any permanent national dress for the women and girls. [177]

9. Instead of the old anointing of the body with fat, they have resorted to cleaning themselves with water and soap, although everywhere Nama, who regard the application of soap and water as detrimental to health, are still to be found. 302 [515]

The habit of the women to powder their bodies with "buchu" which they make for themselves by powdering a great variety of shrubs and roots, is still in vogue to-day, and there are still women who hideously paint their faces with a blackish red salve during the period of menstruation, or early pregnancy and on cold winter days. [341 843]

10. The Nama is not miserly or avaricious. What he has in the form of food or other means of enjoyment he shares in the first place with his family and also with strangers. 574

To smoke alone or to eat a piece of bread which has been obtained accidentally is regarded as very unbecoming. Servants who labour for Europeans and receive their food there are wont to carry part of a special tit-bit home to share it with their people, unless the master, not knowing the Nama custom, should demand that all be eaten before his eyes so that his servants, for whom it is intended, may have the benefit of it and not strangers. [576]

11. The Nama is decidedly inclined to sociability. It is his wont to squat or sit on a low chair near the fireside at night and to tell to the last details and discuss the news of the day; nor do they separate till very late in the night. The Christians like sitting round the fire at night untiringly singing their songs and hymns. They still take great pleasure in the Reed-dance on bright moonlight nights. On 571 535 [521]

14:Hahn L-5 (ca. 1870-1880) 1881 FX13 Hottentot FX13

881 river, among the Gei !Khauas at !Nuis, and among the !Ōgeis, on the banks of the !Kham river. I am, however, assured that even young converts, if they have become of age, absent themselves to outlying places away from the mission stations, to have their bodies washed by the waters of the thunder-clouds.

843 261 27. Also, if a woman during her pregnancy eats of the meat of the lion or leopard, her child will have the characteristics of these animals—ferocity, celerity, swiftness, and strength. They also consider the drinking of lion and panther blood as having influence on the nature of a person or on the child in the mother's womb. A woman lost her temper, and was very cruel to her slave. I spoke to her, and asked whether she did not, as a mistress (lady, geitaras), feel ashamed of herself. She said, she could not help it; I must scold her mother, who once drank panther blood in order to get ferocious children.

626 431 28. A great influence is also attached to the power of an imprecation or curse. If one had a quarrel with a Khoikhoi, there is nothing more painful to him than not to be talked to. He will come repeatedly and apologise, until he hears the word "!ûtago," I have forgiven; and to show his gratitude, he will bring a present—be it a sheep or a cow or whatsoever he may afford to give.

I once had a very unpleasant quarrel with a Namaqua; perhaps he was more in fun, and it was a misunderstanding on my side. Anyhow, I got vexed, and said: "I shall never forget what you have done, and mind what you are about. I will have my day, too; *do not think that*, because I am the only white man here, that you will get the best of me!" He laughed, and thought that I was in fun. I, however, left. A year after he met me on the road in another part of the country; and when he saw that I greeted his friends but did not notice him, he at once borrowed from one of his mates a cow, and said to me: "Take this, and forgive me; but don't be angry any further—I can't bear it." I accepted his apology, and told him to keep the cow. But